



**2020-2022
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Officers

Barbara Kalosky
Chairwoman
North East
Transportation Co./
CTTransit Waterbury
203-753-2538

Mike Carroll
Vice Chairman
Southeast Area Transit
(SEAT)
860-886-2631

Steven Demichele
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(GGBT)
203-366-7070

Treasurer
Josh Rickman
CTTransit
(860) 692.8488

Joe Comerford
Estuary Transit District
(860) 510-0429 x 101

Lori Hammill
Norwalk Transit District
203-852-0000

Philip Johnson
Windham Region
Transit District (WRTD)
(860) 456-2223 x103

Francis Pickering
Western CT Council
of Governments
203-316-5190

Lori Wilk
HARTransit
(203) 744-4070

CACT Executive Director
Mary Tomolonius
148 Bahre Corner Road
Canton, CT 06019
860.989.6164
www.cact.info

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Dear Senator Haskell, Representative Lemar, and Members of the Transportation Committee,

The Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT) believes **HB 5256** which seeks to establish a task force to study the consolidation of local and regional transit districts would best be served by including members from the various statewide transit districts on the Task Force.

Critical decisions will be discussed, and a formal report presented at the conclusion which will impact the transit agencies, their employees, and the riders of public transportation. Who better to educate the committee members about how transit agencies operate, how they cooperate, how they understand the nuances of running public transportation, what services would increase efficiencies, navigating the switch from diesel to electric bus operations, then the operators themselves? These individuals have decades of experience and knowledge between them which can productively guide the Task Force.

I urge the Transportation Committee to include several transit operators from across the state, so the Task Force makes recommendations to further enhance and provide services to Connecticut residents who use and rely on public transportation.

As Amy Parmenter, Manager, Public and Government Affairs, AAA, Greater Hartford noted *“An efficient, safe transportation system moves people –literally and figuratively. Traffic is a turn off. There can be no talk of moving Connecticut forward - of welcoming new businesses and stemming the flow of residents moving out of state - without giving thoughtful consideration to the future of transportation here, what that will look like, who it will serve and how it will be funded”*.

Public transportation in a small state like Connecticut is both attractive and essential to businesses, recent college graduates and other new job market entrants. A transportation system that is safe, well-maintained, and efficient provides numerous benefits including economic benefits, congestion reduction, better quality of life, community viability, mobility options and environmental benefits. Connecticut’s transportation system has long faced an aging infrastructure, severe and continued budget cuts, future funding insecurity and other issues.

I urge you to be sure the Task Force’s recommendations are thoughtful, forward thinking, economically sound and become an innovative document that moves public transportation into the future in a positive and creative manner.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 860.989.616, mary@cact.info.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Tomolonius, Executive Director
Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT)